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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **IOWA ACT SCORES REMAIN STEADY** *Students completing core coursework score highest*

(DES MOINES, IOWA – August 14, 2001) The average composite ACT score among Iowa students who graduated in May was 22.0, with the highest average scores coming from those students who completed core coursework in preparation for college.

“Participating in a core high school program clearly benefits those students planning to attend college,” said Ted Stilwill, director of the Iowa Department of Education. “These results continue the trend we see that rigorous classes provided by Iowa schools do a good job of preparing students for postsecondary education.”

Core coursework is defined as a typical college preparatory program including four years of English and three or more years each of mathematics, social studies and natural sciences. Students taking core averaged a composite score of 22.9, while students with less than core averaged 20.0. Iowa considers a score of 20 to be the cut-off score that predicts whether a student will succeed in a typical college curriculum.

Stilwill said he is pleased with the score results, but would like to see increases both in the average scores and in the numbers of students who take the test.

“Our scores have remained consistently high, which makes improvement more of a challenge -- but that’s still our goal,” he said. “I believe we can achieve that by encouraging more students to complete core courses.

“I also would like more students taking the ACT and other college entrance exams,” Stilwill said. “Postsecondary education is all but essential for obtaining a well-paying job in today’s economy, so we’d like to see that more of our high school graduates are planning to attend college.”

NOTE: Comparisons of ACT composite scores between states are valid only for the 25 states where the ACT is the predominant test, defined as those states where at least 50% of graduates take the ACT exam. States with fewer than 50% taking the ACT exam may have a sample of students not representative of that state’s overall student population.

## 2001 ACT SCORES HIGHLIGHTS

- Average composites:  
Iowa: 22.0 (unchanged from last year)  
Nation: 21.0
- Iowa ranking: 3<sup>rd</sup>, behind Wisconsin (22.2,) and Minnesota (22.1)
- Participation:  
Nationwide – 38% of graduates tested  
Iowa – 67% of graduates tested
- Average scores for core vs. less than core

	<u>Core</u>	<u>Non-Core</u>
English	22.4	19.2
Math	22.6	19.4
Reading	23.2	20.3
Science reasoning	23.0	20.5
Composite	22.9	20.0

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